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When climate policy meets foreign policy: Pioneering and national interest in Norway's mitigation strategy

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares Norway's strategies to promote carbon sequestration based climate change mitigation measures Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+). It aims to explain what makes Norway such a strong promoter of the two by focusing on the conceptual characteristics of CCS and REDD+. Treating Norway mitigation action portfolio as foreign policy, a two-level analytical framework is presented to this end. The analysis shows how initially unlikely ideas may be turned into lasting climate strategies when they contribute to bridge a state's national energy interests and international climate obligations. The paper adds to the empirical study of states' climate political behavior within the boundaries of a prevailing energy political paradigm. This topic is particularly timely in a post-Paris setting where states are to provide new mitigation strategies that are compatible with other national interests.

1. Introduction

A key question in the study of global climate politics is what determines states' preferences for different methods of reducing emissions. In international climate regime parlance, such mitigation measures are the "technologies, processes or practices that contribute to (…) reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases" [1]. Mitigation measures based on carbon sequestration refer to "capturing and securely storing CO_2 that would otherwise be emitted to or remain in the atmosphere" [2]. Different approaches to sequestering carbon are expected to have a massive mitigation potential and most of the scenarios that reach the so-called 2 °C target assume widespread use of such options [3]. The international climate regime currently features a couple methods of carbon sequestration, notably based on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and on protecting or enhancing terrestrial sinks [4–6]. CCS signifies technological value chains where carbon is captured at a source, typically from fossil fuels or biomass combustion, and permanently stored in geological reservoirs [7]. In addition to rules for accounting for national land and land-use change, the international climate regime includes a separate mechanism for protecting forests in the global south, called REDD+ (from Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest degradation in Developing countries). It is an arrangement where industrialized states offer economic incentives for protecting forests as giant biological sinks [8].

Yet, despite a supposedly global demand and formal arrangements, states have generally been unenthusiastic about carbon sequestration as part of their mitigation policy portfolios [9,10]. There are, however, country case examples where carbon sequestration is at the heart of national strategy. To find out what explains a state's rare enthusiasm for such options, this paper presents a two-case comparison of Norway's twin policies for promoting carbon sequestration in the shape of CCS and REDD+. Despite variations in both national and international level politics, CCS and REDD+ have remained key to Norway's climate strategy since the 2000s. As an affluent small state seeking to harmonize petroleum exports with ambitious normative commitments, Norway makes a valuable setting for learning how certain types of mitigation measures may help bridge a state's otherwise conflicting energy interests and climate obligations.

Section 2 presents materials and methods. As a theoretical starting point, I suggest viewing Norway's strategy in a Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) perspective. It allows for considering a state's political behavior as the balancing of national preferences and international obligations [11]. Norway basically aims to pursue its interests *and* uphold its international commitments on terms that are mutually acceptable within the international climate regime *and* among national actors with diverging agendas at home [12]. The two-level games metaphor is helpful for examining a state's preference for certain mitigation measures as a political product and, thus, that promoting CCS and REDD+ contributes to squaring Norway's climate and energy political two-level concerns. The next question is if this is because CCS and REDD+ are compelling *concepts* that on their *ideational* basis enable *political solutions* or because CCS and REDD+ are effective mitigation measures that

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successfully deliver material output in line with overall climate policy goals? By contrasting two alternative explanations, the paper first attempts a line of reasoning that sees mitigation measures as socially constructed *ideas* as drivers of a political dynamic [13,14]. This is followed by a traditional rational choice perspective emphasizing material cost-benefit considerations [15]. The applied FPA framework is elaborated in Section 3. Norway's CCS and REDD+ policies are traced using the method of focused, structured comparison in Section 4 [16].

The analysis in Section 5 disentangles exactly how Norway's promotion of carbon sequestration contribute to balancing Norway's interests and obligations. I suggest that certain persuasive characteristics of CCS and REDD+ as concepts, not material results from implementation, have driven Norway's wholehearted commitment to these options at multiple crossroads. The Norwegian experience shows how novel and unproven mitigation measures may be *ideas* that fulfill a crucial political function for a small state that is otherwise stuck between domestic demands and international obligations. Section 6 concludes that Norway's enthusiasm for CCS and REDD+ show how initially far-fetched ideas may be turned into lasting strategy when satisfying this intricate but essential political reality. Considering the prospects for comparable states to promote different methods of carbon sequestration, the analysis highlights how specific national needs, notably including the combination of irrefutable petroleum interests *and* normative ambitions, seem to be a prerequisite for such a strategy.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. A contribution to the empirical analysis of climate and energy policy

This work complements two intriguing strings of research in this journal. First, it adds to the previous contributions that suggest we should take political and social context seriously in energy policy analysis [17,18]. Methodically assessing political systems and their (veto) players offers much needed leverage when addressing "how" and "why" questions in policy analysis, as opposed to the "what" clues offered when primarily focusing on technical feasibility. This empirical turn invites us to examine the interests and ideas that "actually" influence decision making and implementation [19,20] . Second, as introduced above, by aiming to demonstrate the usefulness of FPA for the climate and energy nexus, this article also adds an analytical argument to the journal's recent attention given to linking foreign policy and energy policy perspectives [21,22].

So far, Norway's CCS and REDD+ efforts have been labelled as carbon sequestration based *technological* and *biological siblings*, but they have not previously been studied in comparison [23]. Considered separately, CCS in Norway was first studied as a reconciliatory means for resolving the conflict over the eventual construction of natural gas-fired power plants [24]. Others have treated Norway's CCS policy as a technology research and development (R&D) strategy [25] and as an externally oriented foreign policy initiative [26]. In other industrialized countries, the politics of CCS have been studied on a case by case basis [9] or comparatively [27,28]. The overall picture is that CCS has materialized to a lesser extent than what its proponents hoped for [29,30]. Turning to REDD+, Norway's engagement was initially studied as a case of Official Development Assistance (ODA) or as a strategy in the international climate negotiations [10,31]. Accounts of the domestic politics behind its inception point to the crucial agency of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOs) in this process [32]. Previous analyses of overall Norwegian climate politics emphasize the influence of a globally oriented discourse and of entrepreneurial actors operating as carriers of ideas in individual decision-making processes [33,34].

2.2. Research design and methods

Given Norway's strong support for CCS and REDD+, as we shall see, the two cases constitute what arguably are *crucial* cases of carbon sequestration promotion. Crucial cases are helpful for assessing the analytical value of theoretical claims, which implies that studying Norway is valuable for explaining variation among industrialized countries' support for such measures [35,36]. Beyond carbon sequestration, CCS and REDD+ are dissimilar constructs along almost every conceptual axis (e.g., hi-tech vs. low-tech, fossil carbon vs. biological carbon, combustion off-streams vs. land-use change, potential for emissions reductions within Norway vs. forested developing country potential). Thus, the two may also be *least similar* cases that despite such differences share a strong footing in the same polity. I argue that a structured and focused comparison based on process-tracing and congruence offers as an effective design for this within-country setting [16,37].

Moreover, assessing an idea's causal effect on policy is a methodological challenge (as well as an epistemological and theoretical one, to be elaborated in Section 3.2. below). At the very least, it requires identifying whether decision-makers possessed an idea before making decisions, if the idea shaped choices, and to rule out if the idea may be reduced to material factors of the circumstances of choice [38]. Doing so mandates process-tracing with an "expansive empirical scope" across a wide temporal range, and multiple levels of analysis, such as in the FPA framework presented below. Within-case comparisons, for example before and after change of government at the national level, help ruling out multicollinearity where possible. Looking for such variance along the temporal scale helps account for changes in both ideational and material factors in a qualitative case study. In addition to document studies, data is gathered from 17 semi-structured interviews with previous and current Norwegian ministers, state secretaries, members of parliament, senior bureaucrats, industry and NGO representatives, as well as from attending multiple CCS and REDD+ stakeholder conferences in Norway 2011–2015 [39,40].[1]

3. Theory

3.1. Climate change mitigation and foreign policy analysis

Building on the two-level games metaphor, FPA aims to explain public policy that takes place in relation to entities outside the state [11,12]. First, an explanatory focus on the domestic level proposes that Norway's behavior follows from a national dynamic where policy accommodates the agendas of winning coalitions of domestic actors – this is the aggregate national interest [41]. In Norway, industry and the major left and right leaning political parties aim to uphold the prominent role of the petroleum sector. ENGOs and the smaller political parties pursue the climate action agenda. Domestic politics is characterized by a parliamentary system with a preference for settling such issues in broad compromises. This requires finding mutually acceptable solutions to a win-set that is otherwise a zero-sum game among pro-petroleum and pro-climate actors.

Second, FPA also stresses the importance of external influences on state behavior. This systemic perspective focuses on the state's fundamental situation in the international system and the international climate regime's normative influence on state behavior [42,43]. In this view, the climate regime prescribes what are acceptable means for states to fulfill their mitigation commitments [44,45]. As a small state, Norway cannot move the international regime process unilaterally or resist external demands for appropriate behavior. We will consider two possible explanations as to why CCS and REDD+ fit Norway's needs in this two-level space, starting by theorizing how ideas shape policy processes.

[1] The author also owes to inform that he was a member of Norway's REDD+ project team in the Ministry of Environment from 2011 to 2013. While this background gives thorough understanding of the cases at hand, it may also cause additional biases. Measures, such as interviews with diverse parties and thorough process-tracing, were taken to compensate for such potentially adverse effects.

3.2. Primary explanation: CCS and REDD+ are ideas that solve Norway's two-level game

Ideas are "normative commitments, causal or descriptive beliefs about the world (…) from which actors draw specific beliefs or policy prescriptions" [38]. In the political economy literature, it is long argued that ideas may have a "persuasiveness, and hence a political dynamism, of their own" because of their "ideational qualities" [46]. In line with "norm-centered" or "ideational institutionalist" political theory, ideas may be treated as causal factors because they have material consequences [44,47]. As such, climate political entrepreneurs [48,49] are not at the forefront of our inquiry. Instead, the key assumption is that different ideas lead to different policy.

Viewing different mitigation measures as different abstract concepts with different policy implications allows for an analysis where otherwise technical options become *ideas* that fulfill important functions by forging *political* solutions in the two-level setting. Sticking to a taxonomy developed for foreign policy, there are three mechanisms in which ideas impact policy; as policy *roadmaps*, as *glue* or through *institutionalization* [14]. When functioning as *roadmaps*, an idea guide behavior by prescribing courses of action that are not based on a proven track record but on its persuasive characteristics. Second, in the absence of obvious cooperative solutions, ideas may "expand the pie" by indicating alternative equilibria and thereby glue political solutions among otherwise conflictual agendas. This mechanism is central in the garbage can model and similar frameworks [13]. Third, once an idea becomes part of an organizational design, institutional logics determine incentive structures even after the interests of an idea's creators change. Consequently, "ideas are politically salient only when embedded within some set of existing cognitive and political structures" [14].

Among the few contributions that consider different types of mitigation measures as ideational concepts, carbon lock-in theory categorizes mitigation measures based on their potential impact on the energy political economy. It suggests that fossil fuels dependent states are "carbon locked-in" because of the overwhelming importance of fossil energy in such economies [50]. Since this limits the range of viable mitigation measures, the only acceptable alternatives are "end-of-pipe solutions" that do not disrupt the current energy political structure. This resonates with the FPA perspective, where politically feasible climate solutions help bridge domestic concerns and international commitments. Thus, the shared message from FPA and carbon lock-in theory is that viable mitigation measures, as ideas, need to deliver on the state's climate commitments without defying key material interests. Norway is arguably in a state of exports-based carbon lock-in. Its economy relies on petroleum sales and vested petroleum interests have been found to impact previous climate policymaking [34,51,52]. If so, for Norway, CCS and REDD+ fit the "end-of-pipe" category since both concepts are based on carbon sequestration.

In brief, an explanatory focus on CCS and REDD+ as social constructions in political processes infers that Norway will adopt and stick to these mitigation measures as long as they credibly fulfill Norway's political needs in the two-level games setting. The theory suggests that this behavior is not based on evidence that the courses of action prescribed by the idea leads to material change, such as reduced emissions. Instead, successfully identifying and advocating mitigation measures that *are deemed legitimate* in Norway's constrained climate political room of maneuvering may be an accomplishment of such significant that it outplays the importance of *actually* contributing to mitigating climate change, as discussed in the following.

However, since proving such an ideational dynamic is notoriously hard, what we as researchers can do is to observe whether the theorized mechanisms above occur empirically and constantly challenge our primary explanation with alternatives (Jacobs 2015). For example, the arguments above would be severely weakened if CCS and REDD+ indeed provided tangible results in correspondence with Norway's overall climate policy goals. Let us in the following consider what that explanation would look like.

3.3. Alternative explanation: CCS and REDD+ effectively helps Norway fulfill its mitigation obligations

The attempt here is to contrast whether preferences for carbon sequestration based mitigation measures are best understood from the perspective of appropriateness or consequentiality. The above focus on ideas underlines the former, whereas rational choice theory is the basis for the latter [15,53]. The straightforward assumption is that a strategy is chosen because it delivers on its ambition, suggesting that a state picks and sticks to mitigation measures based on cost-benefit considerations [54]. When focusing on implementation in this view, government agencies are challenged to connect the dots from lawmakers' initial decisions to bankable emission reductions or other stated goals. This is not trivial, as materializing sophisticated mitigation measures may assume technology and institutional arrangements to be invented along the way [55]. In its essence, this alternative explanation focusing on implementation results says that Norway's long-standing support for CCS and REDD+ is because these strategies successfully fulfill their stated objectives. This can be measured against Norwegian parliament's explicit goals for its CCS and REDD+ efforts and the government's reporting on these goals. Before embarking on that analysis, let us explore the two empirical cases at hand, beginning with an overview of climate policy-making in Norway.

4. Empirical data

> *"The Norwegian rainforest funding could, if we succeed, lead to reductions that are manifold Norway's total emissions (…). We must also succeed with carbon capture and storage. (…) With this in combination, we have the potential to cut global emissions by half"* Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg summarizes Norway's global climate change mitigation contributions in the 2008 new year's speech [56]

4.1. Climate policy in Norway: from national pioneering to global cost-effectiveness

Norway was a climate policy pioneer that as early as in 1989 declared a unilateral emissions stabilization target that was followed up with a CO_2 tax in 1991 [34]. Advocating an ambitious climate regime internationally was also an early priority that fed into a tradition of Norway actively promoting rules-based international cooperation [57]. The stabilization target was abandoned, however, as a strong growth in Norway's petroleum sector made domestic emission cuts increasingly difficult throughout the 1990s [33].[2] Several governments struggled to reconcile a petroleum exports-based economy with an ambitious mitigation policy. While pro-environment parties in parliament kept climate action high on the agenda, the larger pro-industry parties confined the scope for action. The compromise solution was to set ambitious emission targets but on terms that would not disrupt the economy, namely by expanding the system scope beyond national borders. This was possible by defining *global cost-effectiveness* as a guiding principle for climate action, which implied extensive use of the Kyoto Protocol's flexible mechanisms [58]. Also for the post-2020 Paris Agreement, Norway plans to rely on international cooperation to meet its mitigation obligations as government has opted to become part of the EU's carbon cap. Negotiations are under way between Brussels and Oslo as to what should be the non-member's contribution to the joint effort.

In this setting, Norway's CCS and REDD+ strategies represent concrete ways of realigning seemingly conflictual energy interests and climate commitments. The significance of this resolution is underlined

[2] By 2000, the petroleum sector provided half of Norway's export revenues (2000: 48%, 2005: 54%, 2010: 47%, 2015: 39% of total exports).

Table 1
Highlights in Norway's CCS policy.

Year/spec.	1997-	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Int. level CCS milestones	2003 USA launches the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum	G8 support CCS; IPCC special report on CCS		Upbeat EU policy for CCS	Global economic downturn dampens global CCS enthusiasm		Stocktaking reveals few CCS plants opened globally and underwhelming outlooks			Canada opens coal based CCS plant	UK cancels CCS plan
UN climate regime developments	Kyoto protocol entry into force. Negotiations over post-2012 regime					COP-15 fails to agree on a post-2012 regime	COP-17 allows CCS into the CDM	COP-18 agrees a second Kyoto Protocol commitment period 2012–2020 for Norway			
CCS policy milestones	Experience sharing from CCS activities, participation in forums and UNFCCC negotiations (e.g. on CCS in CDM from 2006)				Norway's first international CCS action plan			Amended CCS strategy. New 2020 goal formulation		New global CCS strategy with new goal formulation	
National level milestones		The Stoltenberg II government takes office			The first political climate settlement			The second political climate settlement	The Solberg government takes office after national elections.		
National level CCS specific developments	CCS at Sleipner 1996 and Snøhvit 2004		Mongstad TCM-CCM agreed		Mongstad TCM-CCM is "lunar landing" Implementation but with several setbacks and budget breaches.			TCM opened	CCM canceled	Domestic focus on CCS from industrial sources and R&D	
	Gas power conflict turns to CCS R&D for resolution							New policy goal of a CCS plant by 2020		Policy goal of a CCS plant by 2020 maintained	

by the fact that CCS and REDD + still are key priorities for Norway despite significant within-case variations at both the domestic and international levels, as shown in the following. Let us explore if this continuing fit is mainly due to the characteristics of CCS and REDD + as conceptual mitigation measures or because policy implementation has provided beneficial material results.

4.2. CCS in Norway

Norway's CCS policy has so far evolved through five distinct phases. Although the CCS term had been developed at the conceptual level since the 1980s, its first use was for CO_2 separation and re-injection at the Sleipner offshore gas field in 1996. The Snøhvit gas field was set up for CO_2 storage on a similar basis in 2004 [24]. Both were industrial decisions to minimize costs under the national CO_2 tax regime. These experiences proved that such sequestration worked, showing how CO_2 storage could align environmental and economic concerns. This contributed strongly to the standing of CCS as a solution in Norwegian politics.

Second, CCS functioned as "technological glue" in the so-called gas power conflict of whether to allow natural gas-fired power plants in the 1990s [59]. While pro-industry forces supported the initiative, environmentalists were concerned that this addition to Norway's hydro powered electricity system would inflate carbon emissions in violation of its international obligations. Entrepreneurial ENGOs eventually brought the parties together over the prospects of CCS for such power plants [48]. Finding common ground on this issue was important since Norway's parliamentary system kept producing minority and coalition governments where pro-climate and pro-industry parties had to cooperate. By the mid-2000s, the promise of "CO_2 free" gas power plants from CCS was a widely accepted solution to stationary emissions sources, even if no such plants had previously been built. As the global cost-effectiveness principle prevailed in national the climate political discourse, R&D increasingly became a solution to Norway's dilemmas, including in the gas power conflict [25]. This contributed to a shift of focus from CCS being means for curbing domestic emissions and towards technology development for global use.

Third, CCS became subject to unprecedented governmental intervention in 2006. National elections gave birth to a new majority coalition government in 2005 that would only allow gas power plants that were "CCS based". However, state-owned petroleum major Statoil requested permission to build a new gas power plant at the Mongstad industrial site. The political compromise was to allow the power plant and that the government would cost a two-track CCS effort. In stage one, Technology Center Mongstad (TCM) would be built to research carbon capture technologies. In stage two, the Carbon Capture Mongstad (CCM) project would retrofit a full-scale CCS system to sequester carbon for permanent storage. While being products of domestic politics, the TCM and CCM projects functioned as a launch pad for extended Norwegian global CCS advocacy [26]. The TCM went operational in 2012, while the CCM was canceled in 2013 due to high costs.

Fourth, Norway launched an explicit CCS foreign policy in 2008. In preparation of the climate regime negotiations in Bali in 2007, a parliamentary "climate settlement" was prepared to decide Norway's positions. An international CCS action plan became part of the deal. It included diplomatic means in multilateral clubs, the use of ODA funding to promote CCS in developing countries, offering over 160 million Euros to CCS projects in Eastern Europe, and a push to have a dedicated mechanism for CCS in the climate regime, including to have CCS accepted into the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). As part of Norway's external CCS work, some efforts were also spent preparing transnational CO_2 storage in the North Sea, notably by approaching the other North Sea states and attempts to allow cross-border CO_2 transportation under the London and Oslo-Paris Conventions. A second cross-parliamentary "climate settlement" in

2012 reaffirmed Norway's international CCS commitment. The second political settlement also imposed a new 2020 deadline for the completion of a Norwegian CCS project, in case the CCM was delayed or canceled. Norway's dedication to CCS globally was re-confirmed also when the previous opposition took office as a new minority government following national elections in 2013. With this, CCS had fully undergone the transformation from a national solution to a national problem to become a global contribution to a global problem. However, none of the externally oriented initiatives led to new CCS plants being built.

Fifth, Norway's CCS policy gained a renewed focus on emissions from industrial sources from 2014. With CCS disentangled from the gas power conflict and the CCM canceled, the government presented a new CCS strategy that re-emphasized the importance CCS R&D technologies for global use. On parliament's 2020 target, the government commissioned studies that considered domestic CCS deployment, including at a cement factory, a fertilizer factory, and Oslo's waste management facility. The government also probed if it could contribute to financing a CCS plant outside Norway. No investment decisions have been made on these projects as of current, although the focus on CCS from industrialized emissions sources now seems to be an established priority. Table 1 below highlights key events in Norway's CCS policy over the past decade. Let us turn to the REDD+ process for comparison.

4.3. REDD+ in Norway

Although the 1997 Kyoto Protocol recognized forests as important carbon sinks, the climate regime did not open for large-scale international cooperation to curb deforestation [60]. This changed when the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, a group of developing forested countries suggested a separate mechanism to incentivize reduced emissions from deforestation in developing countries in 2005. The proposal gained real traction when Brazil accepted that deforestation in the Amazon basin could be discussed in an international governance setting in 2006 [61]. Tagging along to that idea, the influential *Stern Review* labelled avoided deforestation a cost-effective mitigation measure with important co-benefits [62]. Also in 2007, that year's Nobel peace prize laureate, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), showed how emissions from deforestation were comparable to those of the global transportation sector [63]. Against this backdrop, the international momentum for addressing tropical deforestation in a mitigation context was mounting as Norwegian politicians were preparing Norway's positions before the Bali meeting in 2007. However, the government's preparatory white paper ahead of the mentioned parliamentary climate settlement contained no reference to reducing emissions from tropical deforestation [64].

Instead, REDD+ entered Norwegian politics because of two entrepreneurial ENGOs, Rainforest Foundation Norway and Friends of the Earth Norway, in the fall of 2007. They suggested that Norway should commit USD 1billion to reduced emissions from tropical deforestation in line with the Stern review's recommendations. Both the opposition in Parliament and the Socialist Left party within the coalition government were supportive [65,66]. Prime Minister Stoltenberg's Labor Party hesitated at first but yielded to this dual pressure. Soon, Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) was launched for the 2008–2012 period. It was to be run jointly by the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and funded by new and additional ODA funding. NICFI's overarching objective was to contribute to the formation of a post-2012 climate regime with developing country participation in Copenhagen in 2009. Also, NICFI was to ensure cost-effective and verifiable emissions reductions from reduced deforestation and to prioritize protecting natural forests in its efforts.

NICFI initially established partnerships in Tanzania and the Congo Basin based on traditional ODA practice in 2008. The multilateral REDD+ institutions, UN-REDD, FCPF and FIP, were after that established with significant Norwegian contributions.[3] All along, it remained unspecified whether the climate regime's REDD+ mechanism would become part of an international carbon market. To structure its work, NICFI adopted a so-called phased approach to REDD+, as introduced by the *Eliasch Review* [67]. In Phase I, some funding was offered to forest countries upfront to gain a foothold for REDD+. Phase II was meant to foster more significant investments in national forest monitoring systems and for addressing the drivers of deforestation. In phase III, a self-sustaining mechanism for "Verified Emissions Reductions" (VERs) paid *ex-post,* would be reached. Following this "results-based" logic, negotiations with Brazil resulted in a bilateral agreement with an implementation approach where Norway committed up to USD 1 billion for VERs. The phased approach to REDD+ was eventually adopted by the UN climate regime's formal REDD+ mechanism in 2011.

Despite focusing on VERs, NICFI's fiscal management remained subject to Norway's ordinary ODA regulations. This divide between *external* VER payments and *internal* requirements for traditional ODA bookkeeping led to disagreements between the MoE and the MFA. The former understood NICFI's mandate as to deliver urgent results in the climate regime setting and that ODA funds should be used to incentivize policy changes in forested countries that less easily translated to standard ODA templates. The MFA, being responsible for NICFI's economic reporting to parliament, saw it less as a climate policy case deserving "special" treatment. The inherent conflict was also a struggle for power between the two ministries, which cumulated when the MFA unsuccessfully suggested moving the whole NICFI organization to the MFA in February 2012. Also, some politicians and the major development NGOs were concerned that NICFI, being a climate policy initiative, kept receiving 10% of Norway's total ODA. Although the "founding" ENGOs supported NICFI against such criticism, they too were surprised by NICFI's agency and priorities. In their eyes, NICFI overemphasized VERs, and the NICFI bureaucracy also declined their demand that Norway should support "non-carbon benefits" as part of REDD+.

In 2012, NICFI was continued even if no real post-2012 regime had been agreed in Copenhagen in 2009 as first anticipated. The new post-Copenhagen regime setting required an update to Norway's overall climate policy. Parliament concluded that "action against deforestation is probably Norway's most important contribution to the work of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions," [68]. The impression was that NICFI was a success but that the job was unfinished. By 2012, NICFI's portfolio included bilateral agreements, support to multilateral institutions, funding for civil society around the world, and participation in the regime negotiations, reaching organizations in over 40 countries.[4]

NICFI was turned into a permanent section of the MoE and tasked to work for "long-term" aims following the change of government in 2013. Late in the year, the international climate regime finally agreed on the REDD+ mechanism's modalities. NICFI's portfolio was also expanded with new agreements in South America and Africa in 2014 and 2015. When other donor countries took part in these partnerships, including Germany, UK, France, and Sweden, it was in Norway seen as the merit of NICFI's push for the phased approach. In 2014, two evaluations favorably concluded on NICFI's activities and suggested that Norway had contributed to the advancement of REDD+ globally and to reduced deforestation [69–71]. Table 2 below places the evolution of Norway's REDD+ policy in sequence.

[3] UN-REDD: The United Nations Programme for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation. FCPF: Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, comprising the FCPF Readiness Fund and FCPF Carbon Fund. FIP: Forest Investment Program

[4] Although these agreements were bilateral in their *political* nature, *multilateral* channels were used as funding mechanisms in most cases. This organization is by development bureaucrats often referred to as "multi-bi" channeling.

Table 2
Highlights in Norway's REDD+ policy.

Year/specs.	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Int. level REDD+ milestones	CfRN proposes "RED" to COP-11	*The Stern Review* launched	IPCC awarded Nobel Peace Prize for 4th Assessment Report	*The Eliasch Review* on forest finance launched	*The Options Assessment Report for REDD+* commissioned launched UN-REDD established FCPF established FIP established			RIO + 20 meeting on sustainable development		New York Declaration on Forests	
UN climate regime developments	Kyoto protocol entry into force. Negotiations over post-2012 regime				COP-15 fails to agree on a post-2012 regime	COP-16 adopts the phased approach for REDD+	COP-17 agrees determine global regime by 2015	COP-18 agrees a second Kyoto Protocol commitment period 2012–2020 for Norway	COP-19 settles final modalities for the REDD+ mechanism		COP-21 in Paris meeting agrees new global framework post 2020
NICFI milestones			NICFI announced by prime minister Stoltenberg at UNFCCC COP-13	Bilateral partnership with Tanzania agreed The Congo Basin Forest Fund launched jointly with the UK Bilateral partnership with Brazil over the Amazon fund until 2015	NICFI's objectives made public in the 2009 state budget Support for new UN and WB REDD+ institutions 46 projects awarded NICFI "civil society" funding for 2009–2012 Bilateral partnership with Guyana agreed	The REDD+ Partnership launched at Oslo REDD Exchange A bilateral partnership with Indonesia established Bilateral partnership with Mexico agreed	NICFI and UK partner with Ethiopia NICFI initiates a Joint declaration on REDD+ in the Congo Basin signed by 15 countries	42 projects awarded NICFI "civil society funding" for 2013–2015 Internal re-organization after suggestion of moving NICFI to the MFA NICFI joins USAID's project in the Congo Basin A bilateral partnership with Vietnam agreed	NICFI moved fully under the roof of the MCE NICFI's new objectives emphasize "long-term results"	A bilateral partnership with Liberia agreed NICFI and Germany join partnership for REDD+ with Peru Germany, Denmark, Sweden and France join NICFI and UḰs partnership with Ethiopia A joint statement on reducing emissions from deforestation in Colombia and Ecuador signed by NICFI, Germany, Colombia and Ecuador	Bilateral agreement with Brazil prolonged beyond 2015 Norway takes part in the newly established Central Africa Forest Initiative
National level milestones	The Stoltenberg II government takes office			The first political climate settlement				The second political climate settlement	The Solberg government takes office after national elections		
National level REDD+ specific developments		MFA action plan for environmental ODA	MoE white paper on climate policy followed by negotiations NICFI is suggested in a letter from ENGOs Friends of the Earth Norway and Rainforest Foundation Norway Erik Solheim assumes office as joint minister for the Environment and Development Cooperation					Erik Solheim replaced by Bård Vegar Solhjell as Minister of the Environment and Audun Lysbakken as Minister for Development Cooperation. MoE white paper on climate policy	MoE renamed Ministry of Climate and Environment (MCE) Tine Sundtoft is new Minister of Climate and the Environment. No minister of development cooperation appointed but former NICFI director Hans Brattskar is appointed state secretary for development affairs in the MFA.		

Table 3
The evolution of Norway's CCS and REDD+ policy goals over time.

Case	*Changing objectives over time*				
CCS	A solution to the gas power debate: CO_2 free gas power plants	→	Norway's lunar landing: CCS is a policy goal in its own right	→	CCS is global contribution to a global problem, integral to global climate strategy
REDD+	A contribution to the formation of the post-2012 regime in Copenhagen 2009		A contribution to regime formation towards 2020		An effort to deliver "long-term" results within the post-2020 regime

5. Results and discussion

The process tracing evidence suggests that the primary reason why CCS and REDD+ have been elevated to iconic status by successive Norwegian governments is that both represent formidable *ideas*, as opposed to formidably reduced emissions. The implementation phase provided *sufficient* material output to sustain confidence in CCS and REDD+ as legitimate options for Norwegian decision-makers. Before going into detail, let us first acknowledge that the ideational properties of CCS and REDD+ in Norwegian climate politics progressed over time as objectives and timeframes shifted. This conceptual evolution was most evident for CCS, which first was devised for offshore petroleum extraction and later came on land to "clean" natural gas power plants. It was after that portrayed as a global option for any conceivable smokestack, including from domestic industry. The REDD+ concept saw a transformation from a vague idea about protecting forests to a collection of formal rules under the UN climate regime. This is summarized in Table 3 below. However, most importantly, the two imagined methods of carbon sequestration maintained a shared set of conceptual characteristics that persisted over time. These compelling properties repeatedly influenced Norwegian decision-making as roadmaps, glue and via institutions, to be addressed in the following.

5.1. Ideas as roadmaps: global carbon sequestration could provide massive emission cuts without transitioning the economy

At multiple crossroads, two shared characteristics made CCS and REDD+ function as coarse but effective policy roadmaps in Norwegian climate politics. First, politicians' and ENGOs' undisputed confidence in these concepts' massive *problem-solving potential* repeatedly fueled their enthusiasm. As ideas prescribing how to substantially reduce emissions, on both causal and normative terms, the two concepts were nearly unanimously seen by Norwegian stakeholders seen to offer *necessary* and *nearly inexhaustible emission reductions*. Second, this potential could only be unleashed if applied worldwide in a *global context*. For CCS, politicians, ENGOs and some R&D actors, stressed that Norway could develop and supply the required technology and possibly utilize the North Sea seabed for storing carbon from much of continental Europe. Similarly, for REDD+, the mitigation potential was deemed nearly infinite when considering the need for endless international cooperation for the maintenance of tropical forests as global sinks. In addition, several informants, both politicians of different colors and bureaucrats, underline that they viewed CCS and REDD+ as mitigation options capable of providing tangible, "measurable" emission reductions. To these policymakers, this claimed measurability was, perhaps paradoxically, considered an asset and in contrast to the abstractions of contemporary Kyoto style emissions trading.

So even if CCS admittedly comprised a largely unproven sequence of technologies, and although the causal chain for reducing emissions from avoided tropical deforestation was more complex than what Norwegian politicians could control, these conceptual characteristics made CCS and REDD+ a winning recipe in Norway. From the policy roadmap perspective, it is therefore perhaps not surprising that multiple informants from different ministries, as well as representatives from ENGOs and R&D, independently referred to CCS and REDD+ as pillars of Norway's "global climate political profile" and Norway's "responsibility" as an "oil and gas nation," along the lines of a particular implicit Norwegian climate political identity.

5.2. Ideas as glue: novel ideas expand the domestic win-set

Beyond shaping the overall policy direction as compelling roadmaps over time, it was as political glue that the CCS and REDD+ concepts first impacted Norwegian decision-making. Initially imposed by ENGOs and later picked up by other actors, the CCS and REDD+ terms were ideational devices capable of realigning diverse actors and motivations within Norway's domestic space for compromise. This was possible because of a consensus-oriented political system looking for compromise solutions. For CCS, this came to show when CCS first was framed as a remedy to the natural gas power plant controversy, when finding common ground within government prior to the Mongstad "lunar landing," and, when filling Norway's ambitious climate diplomacy with content on *how* to reduce emissions. For REDD+, the two ENGOs' initial REDD+ proposal served a similar function by gluing consensus in parliament over the first political climate settlement. Observing this mechanism occur in both empirical processes suggests that proposed mitigation measures, as novel policy ideas, indeed can contribute to political solutions if they are designed to within the fundamentals of the domestic win-set.[5]

For example, several informants report that promoting CCS and REDD+ represented opportunities for taking the otherwise constricting global cost-effectiveness paradigm in national climate policy, as described in Section 4.1, very literally. Informants from ENGOs and pro-climate political parties claim that the key puzzle they sought to solve was "how Norway can make a difference on such terms?" Looking for more concrete climate policy actions other than "only" working for a comprehensive international regime, one previous minister said that " "it" could have been anything [other than CCS and REDD+], as long as it fitted this political reality", suggesting that CCS and REDD+ were chosen based on their "successfully argued" compatibility with the globally oriented discourse and "luck". Therefore, proponents of CCS and REDD+ made the case for low marginal costs from global deployment, based on the promised potential for abundant global mitigation results from these options (all without disrupting in the petroleum economy). A previous state secretary from another political party also said that the government was looking for something "launchable" and that both CCS and REDD+ fitted this need for new climate policy initiatives.

However, there seems to be a discrepancy between what CCS and REDD+ meant as strategic roadmaps and as glue among different stakeholders. Notably, informants from industry and R&D expressed significant disappointment with some of the government's CCS policy. If Norway really wanted to "be the CCS country" along the lines of the overarching roadmap narrative discussed above, they questioned why more was not done to allow for a national CCS industry with extensive use of the North Sea seabed as storage space? These informants felt that the politicians were not sincere but only "used" the promise of CCS to find political solutions on an ad-hoc basis. They felt there was no comprehensive CCS strategy other than individual projects and an

[5] Others have pointed to the important agency of entrepreneurs or "carriers of ideas" for that to happen [24,32].

ambitious rhetoric, despite there being white papers and generous public budgets. This experienced disconnect between the promise of the overarching CCS idea, as broadly inclusive roadmap, and actual policy implementation serves to illustrate the primary importance put on CCS as a vehicle for gluing coalitions when in dire need. Similarly, although the "results based approach" was the hallmark of the REDD+ effort, it was only a very limited number of NICFI's partnerships (notably with Brazil and Indonesia) that in reality were intended to deliver such results. Most of Norway's other year-to-year REDD+ efforts, like in the Congo Basin, were more like traditional capacity building activities and aimed at mounting political support in forest countries.

5.3. Institutionalization: making it fit in the two-level setting?

Norway's CCS and REDD+ efforts are also cases of novel ideas being cemented into organizational design. The two concepts formed the basis for a similar institutionalization at the national level but not internationally. CCS and REDD+ in Norway are remarkable cases of government take-over and bureaucratization of new ideas. Despite being ENGO proposals from the onset, the two cases show how the implementation of climate policy ends up at the bureaucratic top-level because what is being administered is significant to the national interest. The bureaucratic politics of CCS are fairly top-down and straightforward, with the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (MPE) directing policy at home and abroad.[6] The REDD+ experience similarly highlights a strong bureaucratic agency at the domestic-international intersection, much beyond what ENGOs and politicians foresaw when initiating the initiative. Several informants report that this became particularly pertinent in the initiative's selection of partner countries, its preference for funding NGOs to take part in REDD+, and its strong stance against including payments for so-called non-carbon benefits in the international REDD+ mechanism. These positions were examples of decisions being taken on the bureaucratic organization's own initiative and often contrary to the views of the "founding" ENGOs. However, despite similarly strong support within Norway, CCS and REDD+ faced distinctively different receptions abroad. REDD+ soon institutionalized around a core set of rules within the climate regime that also attracted stakeholders from outside the climate change realm. In contrast, CCS did not go through a similar formalization as external parties were less ready to buy into the concept.[7] Some potential reasons are discussed below but, in general, the lack of global coordination and momentum effectively limited the potential impacts of Norway's global CCS effort.

5.4. So did it work?

What can the results from implementation tell us about the validity of the arguments focusing on the political implications of the CCS and REDD+ conceptual properties? In short, CCS and REDD+ in Norway make one case of relative success and one of relative failure when measured against the objectives stated by parliament and as reported on by government and its commissioned reviewers. The REDD+ policy largely achieved its goals, the CCS policy did not. Still, despite such mixed results, both concepts endure at the forefront of Norwegian climate strategy towards 2020 and beyond.

NICFI delivered *sufficient* results in the eyes of Norwegian policymakers and evaluators. The concept notably became an integral part of the international climate regime and formed the basis for a multitude of partnerships with external partners.[8] The chosen implementation approach was an important reason for this achievement, some informants underline. The phased approach arguably helped secure a global anchoring by promising VERs for those motivated by cost-effective mitigation (e.g. Norwegian politicians), targeted development assistance (e.g. multilateral organizations and forest country governments), and civil society grants to boost NGO stakeholders' involvement. Also, making NICFI subject to *additional* ODA funding was pivotal for its access to fresh funding, several politician informants stressed.[9] However, several informants also underline that, in retrospect, making REDD+ work was harder than anticipated. For example, NICFI could not help the formation of a post-2012 international regime in Copenhagen, not attract other states to provide REDD+ funding equivalent to Norway's levels, and not decisively attribute Norway's contributions to reduced tropical deforestation. Still, the measurable outputs from implementing REDD+, such as the number of high-level partnerships and formal recognition for REDD+ in the international climate regime, trumped such shortcomings.[10]

In contrast, the CCS strategy did not deliver on its objectives whether at home or abroad. Beyond the pre-existing Sleipner and Snøhvit projects, no new CO_2 was stored because of Norway's dedicated efforts. Nor was CCS supported in the climate regime the way that Norway aimed for, with its recognition in the CDM being late and only of symbolic importance. At home, the TCM may have contributed to useful innovations, but this has not yet contributed to the sequestration of additional carbon. The 2020 deadline for a new CCS project will not be met, although the government has repeated its interest for contributing to one or several of the projects in development. However, the scoreboard for CCS may have looked differently if more exogenous factors had turned out favorably for Norway's global CCS work. For example, if the Eastern European countries had accepted Norway's EEA funds for building CCS plants, and if the global economic downturn did not impede the EU's economic incentives for piloting CCS projects, results could have been better. Among all other things, the two cases highlight how externally oriented policy require solid institutional and political footings at both national and international levels to yield tangible results.[11]

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explain Norway's extraordinary enthusiasm for carbon sequestration based mitigation measures CCS and REDD+. It revealed a striking similarity with respect to how certain shared characteristics of the two concepts have impacted decision-making in

[6] Some private sector informants argue it was a "mistake" to let the MPE administer the whole CCS strategy due to its alleged narrow focus on "petroleum and energy," not pollution control. Also informants in several ministries refer to an intra-ministerial struggle between the MPE and the MoE on this matter, in which the latter was decisively defeated, even if the domestic focus on CCS has left petroleum and energy production altogether.

[7] Intriguingly, an informant in the foreign service claimed that the "official" international CCS strategy in reality was meant to "obtain an international effect" from Norway's ongoing domestic CCS efforts, and that it was never intended as a strategic tool for new international CCS action.

[8] High level bureaucrats informally suggest that we by 2020 should be able to see if the incentives Norway provide actually have an effect on behavior in forest countries and that NICFI should only be continued in its current form if that is the case.

[9] Similarly, when CCS became foreign policy, it too drew on ODA sources. Since the budgetary ceilings for the ODA and EEA funds are preset independently from CCS and REDD+ objectives, both cases show how tapping into "no regret" budget lines may mobilize financial means for externally oriented climate policy implementation. Some politician informants even claimed that the REDD+ initiative's results based approach using ODA meant that this was "safe" and a "controlled risk," since one believed that Norway could withhold its contributions if results lacked and that allocation was "just" ODA (as a source of funding with an already embedded risk, and an allocation that would not compete with other non-ODA causes anyway).

[10] While several politician informants claimed that the REDD+ initiative improved overall bilateral relations with countries like Brazil and Indonesia, some informants in relevant ministries claimed that Norway's REDD+ efforts actually did not "open new doors" and that the government's REDD+ work did not have the anticipated positive spill-over effect on other topics in the international climate negotiations.

[11] For example, interviews with individuals with intimate knowledge of the workings of the London Protocol suggest that no one really seems to know why most treaty countries for years have chosen *not* to ratify the necessary amendment to allow cross-border CO_2 transportation. Overcoming this hurdle is a necessary condition for example for using the North Sea seabed for storing CO_2 emissions from continental Europe.

Norway. The cases of CCS and REDD+ in Norway have shown how promoting certain conceptual mitigation measures may both serve as the basis for political compromise and as the purpose of sustained action. As such, both processes illustrate that novel mitigation measures may be proposed by non-state actors but eventually end up as the domain of potent bureaucratic agents. Their implementation need not be "perfect" but be *sufficient* for upholding widespread confidence in the mitigation measures' potential. A solid domestic foundation may not be sufficient over time, however, as both cases also show how endorsement outside national borders is key to what material results such policies may yield. The Norwegian CCS effort did deliver on its ambition and it remains to be seen if the international REDD+ mechanism gains sufficient traction by 2020. Turning to the prospects for other states to proactively invest in carbon sequestration based options, the Norwegian cases highlight that specific national needs, when unquestionable fossil interests face persistent normative ambitions in a consensus-oriented parliamentary system, seem to be preconditions for such a strategy.

In sum, the analysis has shown how societies may select inventive policy options on their potential to mollify powerful vested interests and be consistent with the prevailing energy policy paradigm.[12] Focusing on CCS and REDD+ as social constructions suggests that Norway sticks to these mitigation measures as long as they credibly fulfill Norway's needs in the two-level games setting. Upholding this strategy is not primarily based on evidence that the courses of action prescribed by these ideas produce material change corresponding to their ideal potential. Instead, successfully identifying and advocating mitigation measures that are deemed legitimate in a constrained climate political room of maneuvering may be an important accomplishment in itself. Therefore, the FPA specific take-home message is that initially far-fetched policy options may be turned into lasting strategy when they as persuasive ideas, fitting both the domestic win-set and international obligations, contribute to harmonizing a state's material energy interests and normative climate commitments. Thus, exactly *how* states choose to go about curbing emissions is not just an issue of technical feasibility but also one with foreign policy implications. While this work examined two empirical cases from Norway, future research would do well to look for other instances where specific conceptualized mitigation measures have helped harmonize a state's normative and material concerns. More work is needed to improve our understanding of what really makes prominent mitigation measures politically feasible.

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